Dec 28
1917

Friday.

Dearest,

It will be quite all
right for the children to
come this week end.
Ray is ill, can't come.
The only thing we're short
of is sugar. If they could
bring what they would
have at home, everything
else is quite easy.
We shall expect you & children
& Roger if possible, for
lunch tomorrow.

I never thanked you
for the flowers which are
lovely.
Would it be a good plan
for me to bring the
children back on Monday
& possibly stay the
night?

V. W.

? 2 Jan 1918

Ashcham,

Wednesday.

Dearest,

Nelly is coming to say good bye, so I am sending the paints & 2 vases & pens by her. Would you be so kind as to give her my umbrella, which you forgot to remind me to take — having designs of your own, I daresay. I enclose Aunt A's letter in case it may amuse you — but would you send it back. It was very

melancholy not to see more of you
but the little I did see seemed
in fine feather, & I had
some difficulty in restraining
poor B's amorosity, which
became at moments
violent — Never was there a
more lovely creature — I'm
afraid the children mean to
make me jealous. I enjoyed
myself greatly. & hope you will
ask me in Feb:.
Love to Poor Bun.

Yr
VB

1897

Hogarth,
Tuesday 29th Jan.

Dearest,

I now begin another letter, partly that should I die tonight you may know that my last thoughts were of you. Not that you care – but think of all the gossip you'd miss – yes, that touches the one sensitive spot. My chief item – Barbara – is stale by this time. I daresay you've written her an epuruvi another letter in your best style. She burst in this morning saying she was going to be married on Friday. With consummate presence of mind I exclaimed "Then you've chosen the right man!" I hadn't the least notion which. She said "Yes, it's Nick." So I said "Of course Nick; the right man", & she said, "Yes, he's the right man to marry, but Saxon is very wonderful as a friend. And it's not going to make the least difference any way, & we're all delighted it, & we're all agreed, & we're going to Didmarsh for the honeymoon, & Carrington & Lytton'll be there – which makes it all the nicer." I cant say I altogether understand the young; I'm not sure, I mean, that I dont see a reversion to the devoted subservience of our grandmother. Do you think she's in love? Isn't she merely doing what will make him happy? However the latter secure it all is sublime; in many way this method of abolishing private property in love has its exaltation. Perhaps it doesn't imply the highest mental gifts; one might hint at physical deficiencies; or do you think that absolute sublimity in emotion is reserved for eunuchs? Think of the stress & pain & discussing the question over the stove in her studio, & Nick saying

"No, Saxon: yer must marry her;" a Saxon upsing to be happy save
in this happenin' a Barbara suggesting copulation with each
& saying she'd marry either — only it must be the one she
didn't most want to — Or how did they settle it?. I'm
told Saxon has written a full account to yer.

Tuesday. Well yer almost lost me. Nine bombs on
Kew; 7 people killed in one house, a hotel crushed — but
not a hair of Watt's head was touched. I know vaily dont
interest yer when no one yer know is killed, so I won't
describe our night in the kitchen. Barbara was with us
& we all slept on the floor — We have mattresses laid
there every night. Talking to the Levants from 8 to
1.15 (as we did the first time) is so boring — "but nor so
boring as a Description" as yer justly remark — so I pass
rapidly to Ottoline.

She is up for a few days, & sent for me, I rather thought
with a view to extracting something.

NYPL

HAMILL 6/1/66

cant conceive how they bring it off. What Mary's mind is like I've no idea; I mean her manners are so perfect; you will see that I am slightly malicious. A little admixture for the completeness of the pose enters in. After Ottoline, what on the earth's surface am I to talk you about? (This week we are without meat & butter; are you too?) you. Well, old Desmond turned up the other day & I have scented a minute romance for you — I'm afraid only a figment, but still better than nothing. Did you ever meet a woman called Enid Bagnold — would be clever, also smart? who went to Ottoline's parties, & now lives at Warwick & nurses soldiers? "What disagreeable chit?" yes, that is my opinion too. But she has evidently smerked poor old Desmond. She has written a book called, as you can imagine, "A diary without dates" all to prove that she's the most attractive, popular & exquisite of creatures — all her patients fall in love with her — her feet are the smallest in Middlesex — one night she missed her bus & a soldier was rude to her in the dark — that sort of thing. Desmond insists that I shall review it in the Times. First he writes a letter; then he comes & dines; then he gives me the book; then he invites me to lunch with a Prince Bibesco, who is apparently one of Bagnold's lovers; then he writes again — a very curt letter only with the same command — For God's sake review this book! So far I have resisted; but I don't know that Desmond's charms won't overcome me in time. The Roumanian Prince too has the most exquisite voice. To charm me further, Desmond rang him up. & I listened — but the appalling thing is that Desmond is now, whether from drink Bagnold or bankruptcy in one has to be very careful what one says. I guess that Molly's novel has silence, he suddenly starts up a conversation, "O dear! O dear!" something as father used to do. I suspect that he has fearfully lost or burnt his been refused. proof sheets; & then, as he says, he feels it incumbent on him to Eat a drink as much as he can when he dines out, so that his digestion is ruined. Bagnold has said to him 'Now I won't review it in the Times." Bagnold has him in her toils. The question is, am I a match for Bagnold? you would be, of course, but then I'm so susceptible. In the middle of Bagnold paints too

Friday. —

To continue. Imagine Oldolini in a small triangular bedroom at the top of a Bloomsbury hotel; he dressed in black velvet which was dusty, a looking much like a Hop walker in Marshall & Snellgroves. I suppose the light was bad for painting; it was amazingly visible; & a piece of cotton wool had got stuck in her hair, but she wore a great enamelled plate with pearls attached, round her neck. We sat on bedroom chairs & had tea out of a pewter pot, & there was practically no room for anything but a po-cupboard & a large double bed. I didn't find any particular reason why she should to see me — her only anxiety seemed to be that I should might stand as a cooperative member which is apparently her ambition for Philip — Or he may become a writer — I suppose the truth is she must provide him with something to keep him from home. She is coming to town for 3 weeks. I think Fredegonda's desertion has alarmed her slightly. & she wants to spread her net over another shoal of fish. But she's got Mary back again, so that's forgiven me; however she warned me not to believe a word that Clive may say & told me that the wretched cockatoo assures her that he & I have started a correspondence — & she thinks that he say this in order that poor Polly Hammersmith may be jealous, Lena Poll is supposed to have her own flirtations. But as I've never written to Clive, nor he to me, for the long 4 years, I think he must have been pulling one of her fishy feet. She lent me Mary's story in the Egoist, the one you meant, I suppose. It seems to me merely a piece of Omega linen surrounded by 20 looking glasses, & entirely arranged for the eye of the Master; but as you know, I can't endure other people's successes. In fact it struck me rather as the exquisite nymphs of Hyde Park Gate days used to strike me at a dance at the Freshfields: I

TELEPHONE,
RICHMOND 496.

HOGARTH HOUSE,
PARADISE ROAD,
RICHMOND,
SURREY.

I must bring this to an end, which will be
most ~~great~~ gracefully done on the
subject of kindness to sisters. I
took your watch, to the wrong man.
But how can there be two watchmakers
in Poland St. one called Pilfduck, a
the other Pfalmer? Pilfduck is
my discovery; & according to Pilfduck
the balance wheel of your watch is
worn out, & no one in England can
mend it until the war is over.
So I brought it back, & Barbara
enchanted to be of the least service
to you who are her moon of women
a phoenix & device, has now taken it
to Pfalmer, who is quite different, the
says, from Pilfduck, though I should
prefer Pilfduck if it were a question of
my watch, which by the way it now is.
Still there's Duncan's watch ticking
away in my room — which is not
what a watch should do, though a if he
likes I'll take it to Pilfduck a we'll —
but they don't

really amuse you, as you say. The general sentiment is always to the effect that you are the most beautiful & gifted of our friends. Your withdrawal has only veiled you with mystery. I am sometimes welcomed as the Toad who has heard the nightingale's song. Several people have told me that your picture of the morning women was a revelation to them. NYPL Shant God, I say, that she don't write. Ask Julian why we should be glad that cows dont fly: & tell him that I am going to send him a birthday present — only what?

How are you? Influenza, Craig told me, poisons the nervous system, & nourishment is the only way to get rid of it. Do take milk & ovaltine. I have 2 glasses a day.

Yrs.

HAMILL c.1966

I've been having your Eggs every morning; they're perfectly delicious — also the vegetable were heavenly.

23 Feb 1918

Athelhampton,

Saturday.

Dearest,

Dont bother about the milk as we've now persuaded the dairy at Southcare to let us have a quart a day. I am shocked to think that it was only what you call your monthly that prevented you from bicycling here & back with a can round your neck. I wish I could impress on you some of the remarks about influenza & the nervous system which I had to hear every day from Fergusson. You certainly must not come under it. You can spend the night. I doubt whether Leonard is going to London; if he does it will be either Monday or Tuesday; but couldn't you come & any day next week, & spend the night, & then we could gossip together all the morning in my room? I think we shall go back next Friday or Saturday.

I would offer to come to you for a night, but I'm expecting my affairs; they're already overdue, & I've had to promise to spend 2 days recumbent in future. You see, I'm rapidly becoming like poor Mrs. Ditchfield, whose doctor called every morning, but it isn't altogether my fault. In fact I've been grumbling a good deal — I'm not allowed even to work yet, which is the pit of Hell as you'll agree.

NYPL

I had a mysterious letter from Ridgeyond yesterday; there is a wonderful piece of gossip abroad, they say. The only possible victim this time seems to me to be Norton; perhaps he's engaged to Pernel Strachey; or there's Ka; or perhaps Alix may have taken a turn — Do you know the facts? Gerald has been offered 2 jobs in London — a I hear from Karin that Adrian's tribunal want him to go back to work on the land.

We had a very melancholy letter from Saxon. He says that the sight of married happiness is at present too much for him, & so he hadn't

been to see us, but he does not mean to go on being unhappy — poor old wretch.

However I must not part with all my crumbs, or I shall never tempt my gilded dolphin to the surface.

You must teach Julian Greek. I find my chief consolation now in making out Greek plays, a Queen with what I know it's quite worth while. Besides, it will be something to break his teeth against. He wrote me a very charming letter. I think he has the Stephen gift of language (not that it's much to boast of —) by the way I've been in communication with Mrs Smith about some of Father's manuscripts — I'm also in touch both with Gerald Duckworth. with Waller. There crumbs are artfully scattered on the pin y the deep lake, I have already counted 3 bubbles which show that the Spangled monster is meditating whether to rise — or not.

We hope Bunny will come over to any meal tomorrow. We're well supplied with food. As Duncan knows — but I expect he wants to paint.

V. W.

25 Feb 1918

Asheham,

Monday.

Dearest

It will be enchanting to see you on Thursday. We shall expect you for tea. I'm sorry we didn't let you know about the milk before; I thought my letter would reach you on Sunday morning. Nessa says you've kept some for us — which doesn't mean I hope, that you've stinted yourselves — so Leonard may come over tomorrow & fetch it.

We are going on Friday, I think, but we are seriously

Considering whether we shant come
back here for good, or anyhow
for the moons, as it is so
delicious. We might possibly
bring our little pren down.
But we can certainly let you
have the blankets NYPL I forget
how many you want. As long
as you could send them back
in case we came you could
have all we've got.
Before the country can't always
be so nice — but at present
it seems to me like a perpetual
dance of the nymphs - which is
exactly to my taste. But that
partly because of my sense of
the presence behind the hill
of the great mother & all the
familiars — Dedit we have

one once called Quince? There
was Bert a Wilson a Peter Wombat
who went to Earth at Ely of
course; but a poor Mungo, who
died, a a red-haired one; delightful
creatures! Happily they're all
well a fairly randy at present,
owing to the season of the year.
But what can one expect? —
It seems to me that Comedy has
never been quite so bold in her
advance as when she planted you
a your establishment down at
Charleston. Think of the
arrival of Forsdyke, or whatever
his name is, to-morrow! Fate
having touched his wit is
such a fine conception too —
but I must stop. We can give
you enough blankets for one
bed to take back on Friday.

9/13